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SUBJECT: UGANDA HANDS RWANDA 10 MEMBERS OF DISSIDENT GROUP

Classified By: Ambassador Michael R. Arietti, reason 1.4 (B/D)

¶1. (C) Summary. On March 12 Ugandan security forces transferred to Rwandan authorities ten members of the dissident organization RPR (Rassemblement du Peuple Rwandais). These individuals are now in the custody of military investigators, who are determining their personal identity and status within the organization. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has requested permission to visit them at a detention facility outside Kigali. Rwandan security officials view the RPR as one of a number of marginal organizations that jockey for attention and support on the extremist fringe of external opposition groups. They consider the "gesture" by the Ugandans as a modest but encouraging sign of increased cooperation. End summary.

¶2. (C) On March 21, polchief met with Richard Masozera, security advisor at the office of the Prime Minister. Masozera acknowledged continuing GOR custody of the ten RPR members, characterizing them as unimportant members of a marginal organization. While the RPR did engage in recruiting activities among dissident rwandaphones in Uganda, and did aspire toward military action, it posed no present threat to Rwanda, said Masozera. As with several other relatively new organizations operating on the fringes of external political opposition, said Masozera, the RPR hoped to both unify that opposition, and escape the FDLR's negative image as the "remnants of Hutu Power" bent on restarting the genocide. Hence it sought to recruit Tutsis as well as Hutus in Uganda. One or two of the ten detained members might be disaffected Rwandan military personnel who had deserted, he said.

¶3. (C) Masozera termed the handover of the ten as a positive "gesture" by the Ugandans, but said that some elements of Ugandan security forces has actually opposed their surrender to Rwanda. Additionally, Rwandan security forces were concerned that "more senior members" of the RPR "may continue to be tolerated" by the Ugandans. "We have no information on that," he said, "but that is what worries us." However, the GOR welcomed the handover as a sign of increasing cooperation between the two security services and the two governments, he said. With continuing problems with the Lord's Resistance Army on the one hand, and with Rwanda's entry into the East African Community on the other, said Mosozera, "Museveni and his people have more important things to do than support a half-hearted group like the RPR."

¶4. (C) On March 20, ICRC Head of Delegation Pierre Wettach told polchief that he had been in contact with Rwandan military intelligence earlier in the day about the ten RPR members, and had requested access by the end of the week. General Musemakweli, head of military intelligence (DMI), had

told Wettach that the men were being properly treated. Wettach noted that DMI was "usually very good about access," and he hoped for a positive response, while noting that the Rwandan military had no clear legal obligation to allow such access. The ten men were being held at Camp Kami on the outskirts of Kigali, he said, and would likely be moved to one of two military prisons once their questioning had been completed.

¶5. (C) Comment. The handing over of the ten RPR members, on the eve of the Tripartite Plus conference, appears to be another in a series of confidence-building measures the GOR and GOU have recently engaged in, as their relations have taken a turn for the better in the past year or so. Masozera's welcome of the handover of the ten RPR members was tempered by suspicion that Uganda might be hiding more senior figures -- a sign that security force cooperation, while on an upward trend, has some distance to go. End comment.

ARIETTI